



Giles Scott-Smith, *Interdoc. Een geheim netwerk in de Koude Oorlog* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012, 392 pp., ISBN 978 94 6105 208 7).

Scott-Smith's study on the International Documentation and Information Centre (Interdoc) is a remarkable accomplishment. It presents us with a little known part of the international history of the Netherlands and adds to our knowledge of the cultural Cold War. The author combines his interest in the covert aspects of the cultural Cold War, which was the topic of his first monograph on the Congress of Cultural Freedom in 2002, with his expertise on transnational networks, exhibited in his 2008 book, *Networks of Empire*. He has diligently reconstructed how Louis Einthoven (Head of the Dutch *Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*, BVD), Cees van den Heuvel (Head of BVD's training division) and Antoine Bonnemaison (Head of the psychological warfare department of the *Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage*, SDECE) met at the colloques, which were the Franco-German regular meetings aimed at coordinating their psychological warfare efforts. During meetings in Aix-en-Provence and Heelsum, the founding of an institute for the collection of information on Communist tactics was proposed.

In Scott-Smith's book, three themes are intertwined: transnational connections, psychological warfare techniques and the European psychological Cold War, themes that have been underdeveloped – although not entirely absent – in the existing scholarship. In a subtle and coherent narrative we see how the lines between state and non-state actors faded in the early sixties. Van den Heuvel initially led the *Stichting voor Onderzoek van Ecologische Vraagstukken* (SOEV) from his house in The Hague while working with the BVD. The institute was funded by intelligence services, as well as private companies such as Shell, Philips and Unilever, although we never concretely get to know what motivated these companies to do so. The connections within the network were often rooted in family ties. Van den Heuvel sought out Gert Van Maanen of the *Nederlandse Studenten Raad* (NSR) to work within Interdoc Youth, in part because H.J. Rijks – member of SOEV's original board – was a cousin of Van Maanen's father. The intention was that this connection would lead to a more institutionalized SOEV-NSR relationship. At the same time Van den Heuvel and Van Maanen were engaged in a generational conflict about the receptiveness of students for the Soviet ideology. Van den Heuvel's anxiety about the convictions of the youth is also apparent in his need to preserve the lessons of the

Second World War for future generations. It suggests that Interdoc was not only about the Cold War, but was also a socio-conservative undertaking, something the author hints at but could have emphasized a bit more.

Scott-Smith's focus on the European side of the cultural Cold War is the second innovative line that runs through these eight chapters. His study does not only debunk the myth that Interdoc was a front for CIA activities, but more importantly, the institute's rocky relationship with the Americans is closely scrutinized. In early 1960, Allen Dulles, the CIA-chief, had encouraged the Europeans to organize themselves and Interdoc grew because of closer French-German cooperation. Only in September 1968 Cleveland Cram, the CIA station chief of The Hague attended a conference in Zandvoort which had been organized by Interdoc. Chapter 1 is highly informative in this regard because it draws together familiar institutions, such as the NATO Information Service with more obscure groups such as *Paix et Liberté* and Paul Van Zeeland's *Comité International de Défense de la Civilisation Chrétienne* and integrates all of these within the same informal network, a network that Interdoc tried to dominate. The psychological Cold War in Europe was thus never a purely national affair, even with the failure to cooperate within NATO.

Scott-Smith, thirdly addresses a fundamental short-coming in the existing literature on public diplomacy where concepts associated with the goals, strategies, and methodologies, behind public diplomacy have been under-theorized. In November 1959 a delegation of eleven people led by Van den Heuvel visited the Economic League to study its work and the conclusion was drawn that fighting Communism required attention for the material welfare of workers and a positive approach, rather than communicating about the 'evils' of Communism. The working class had to be 'immunized' against the psychological influences of Communism, a strategic choice that stemmed from the idea that Communist propaganda was essentially brainwashing. Van den Heuvel knew that the use of Communist tactics was the best way to respond to Communist arguments, which was why leftist academics were taken for a train ride through the DDR and Poland in 1979-1980. This was supposed to highlight the implications of the NATO Double-Track Decision and confront them directly with the Communist ideology. It thus presents propaganda as something that is not only based on biased views of family life and gender and political values, as shown by Laura Belmonte (*Selling the American way: U.S. propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia PA2008) 158). Propaganda was also the product of transnational borrowing in an attempt to find the most effective way to reach the mind of target audiences.

Nonetheless, Scott-Smith never explicitly addresses how his actors thought that propaganda and Interdoc activities would create influence and power or how it would affect the human psyche. The concrete propaganda projects and publications that emanated from Interdoc are cited in an appendix, while a closer study could have elucidated if and how knowledge acquired during study trips was adopted. The chapter on Interdoc Youth, is primarily an analysis of the experience of Hans Beuker, a Dutch student, and does not go into the semi-scientific theories that were discussed in

preparatory seminars. The reader meets CIA doctor John Gittinger, gets to know the interest in experiments with drugs and a shift is registered to a more socio-scientific approach that valued 'immunization' over 'vaccination'. However, psychological warfare methods were often rooted in assumptions about target audiences that were held by highly educated, white men within the psychological research groups and the information services. Because Einthoven himself admitted that there was a wide gap between science and practice, this is an important point that deserves more attention in future research.

However, this indicating of the analytical limitations should not obscure Scott-Smith's valuable contribution to our understanding of the role played by methods and techniques in the cultural Cold War. A more expanded analysis of the propaganda material would probably have been detrimental for a book that is first and foremost a pioneering network analysis. Furthermore, the source material unavoidably has its restrictions. Interdoc often spread non-attributable material that ended up in personal archives and classified collections of intelligence services. By the end of the 1960s Interdoc distributed its publications to 1300 individuals and institutes in a hundred countries. The author should be commended for working with these archival collections.

To sum up, the author has been too modest. A more concise conclusion, which is now more conceived of as an epilogue, would have strengthened the book by more explicitly drawing out its many excellent contributions to the field. While I found the Dutch translation easily accessible and compellingly written, little mistakes still remained (for instance on 18, 21, 49 and 353). In short, *Interdoc* is a textbook example of what transnational history should be and a solid contribution to the broader field of public diplomacy and the cultural Cold War, which deserves a wide audience.

Frank Gerits, European University Institute